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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews major issues in population education. It offers suggestions for clarifying objectives of population education courses so they will be consistent with both the interests and needs of a society and individuals and groups within the society. Population education is defined as an educational process which assists the individual in gaining literacy in all areas of population study. A review of literature related to population education reveals that scholars in these areas disagree on whether courses on population (1) should be problem oriented or discipline oriented; (2) should be value-free or related to social values; and (3) should offer information and/or assistance to youth regarding effective fertility control. There is also a lack of consensus on whether controversial issues such as minority population growth rates, sterilization, abortion, adolescent pregnancy, and government-sponsored food distribution to poorer nations should be dealt with in the schools. In addition to a lack of consensus in these areas, other major problems exist in population education programs. Many of these programs fail to observe local educational needs and minority group opinions, fail to base courses on information which would enhance rational decision making on an individual and social level, and have a propensity to assign population courses to teachers to whom adolescents do not relate. The conclusion is that population education should be taught as a problem-oriented subject and should consider the needs and interests of the individual student, the family, the community, and society. (Author/DB)

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# Sociopolitical and Educational Climates for Population Education in the United States*

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Population issues as problems to be solved

In the last few years, increasing recognition has been given to the damage being done the environment in which we live, vegetation, animal life, air and water. Those concerned with environmental education recognize it is a problem oriented area and that is the way it is taught in the schools. The same is not true of population education, where one of the biggest issues is whether or not the subject should be regarded as a problem. While some in the field believe that it must be problem centered, the current stance among population educators seems to be against the problem centered approach. Their position is that in terms of the schools, population education should be treated in much the same way as biology, mathematics, or chemistry. Yet the reason that population education developed as an area of work was because there was a problem to be solved.

However, there were objections from some groups in the United States as well as other countries to what seems to be a propaganda approach to the subject. In an effort to quiet criticism which could affect programs, population educators attempted to change the objective for which such programs were originally created. For example, Viederman (1973) suggests that population education should not be approached from the problem standpoint because of possible controversy: "Taught in the schools as a phenomenon to be understood, not as a problem to be solved, population education need not be more sensitive than other areas."

Bouvier (1973) points out that demographic facts are not neutral but have an emotional component. He and Viederman (1971) both argue that although it is impossible for teaching to be "value-free" every

attempt should be made to make it "value-fair." Bouvier states that a valid position for texts prepared for basic courses in demography is to avoid preaching but to present opportunities for evaluating various theories and values and their consequences. This sounds reasonable but what does it mean in practice? In terms of his review of college level demography texts, Day (1973) concluded that the textbooks reviewed did not skirt the basic issue: "The authors all evince some concern over the present and likely future course of world population trends. There is among them no hiding behind a self-proclaimed screen of 'scientific objectivity' to avoid having to face up to the larger human significance of population size and growth in today's world."

The concern of demographers over population trends is not new. Viederman (1973) has pointed out that one of the first calls for including demography in the schools was on the part of Lormier and Osborn (1943) in the early forties. The concern was that the population of Europe and North America might begin a precipitous decline. Two decades later Hauser (1962) again called for population education, saying that the schools in particular should be concerned with demographic findings because of the effects of the postwar baby boom on school enrollment.

Wayland (1973) has further confused the picture by stating that one of the most difficult problems for teachers of population education is the lack of consensus among scholars: "This is a substantial problem for the teacher, arising in part from the interdisciplinary nature of the subject," and that, "for the present, the teacher must attempt to deal with an area in which experts have differing perspectives." This seems odd when

Wayland has also recommended that teachers present all points of view. Teachers at the high school level are used to handling many subject matter areas in which authorities disagree and as in other fields it may be assumed full agreement will never be reached. Even so, the question among authorities is not whether there is a problem but the nature of the problem.

Two recent articles by demographers indicate differing perceptions of the problem of population for the United States.

Kirk (1973) has been concerned with the larger problems of population change. In terms of the current situation he has rejected as oversimplified the concept that the deterioration in quality of life in the United States is due to population size and growth. From a demographic standpoint he sees the problem as distribution and mobility of the population. Where 100 years ago the average American lived on a farm, today he lives in a suburb of a large metropolitan area. Yet the society has not adjusted to the change. Affluence and the automobile have caused a degree of mobility that has resulted in a loss of community, rootlessness and lack of stability, with life styles which put great strain on the individual. From the standpoint of society, the loss of longstanding personal relationships, a loss of identity and the loss of informal sanctions of shared values have resulted in antisocial behavior which laws and police alone are inadequate to handle. But Kirk does not deny that population growth is important. He states, "Of course we don't need more people. But happily, since 1957 the American people themselves have been making the adjustment in population growth in the direction of a lower or no-growth population in the long run."

Kirk then is not concerned about population growth only because recent data indicate a future stable population. Blake (1974) has differed, claiming that survey data indicate the recent decline in birth expectations of young American wives may be due to the intense public attention of population growth and family size rather than to fundamental changes in values. She finds a massing of responses to the two child category when wives 18-24 are asked the number of births they expect to have and that the decline is significant compared with past years. In a survey by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1967 the average number of expected births was 2.9 for wives 18-24. By 1972 the average had declined to 2.3. However, in an examination of Gallup survey responses over the years she finds a lack of congruence in American reproductive attitudes. She concludes "...some conservation might be wise in accepting current birth expectations as valid indicators of the long-run intentions of youthful cohorts." First she found a tolerance for the large family. In a 1972 Gallup survey of whites of voting age, when asked the size of family considered too large both men and women responded with an average of about 5.4 children. Second, she found an aversion to childlessness and the one-child family. The same survey found that when asked the family size considered too small, 81 percent of men and women reported no child or one child as too small. In addition, 80 percent thought an only child was a disadvantage, up from 76 percent in 1950. Only seven percent said that married life was happier without children. Third, she found an inconsistency between respondents' evaluation of the family cycle and childspacing, on the one hand, and their personal acceptance

of the two-child norm on the other. When asked the happiest stage of the life cycle, 42 percent of the males and 46 percent of females said it was when babies are born and very young. Only about 11 percent said that the happiest stage was before children come. In terms of childspacing for both males and females, the number of years from marriage to first birth was 2.4 and about 2.1 years between subsequent births.

While the movement toward a two-child norm may be stronger than the survey data indicate, past experience with fluctuating fertility rates should offer some caution in assuming that the U.S. will reach and remain at a zero population growth rate. There is also little disagreement among authorities that this will eventually not only be desirable but necessary. The conclusion would seem to be that in the United States as in other countries, in addition to distribution and mobility, fertility rates either too far below or above zero population growth will be a variable in the stability of the society and there is likely to be a continued role for demographers and educators who, as Kirk (1973) has pointed out, indicate population trends and problems to the people where, in understanding what is taking place, encourage and support governments to take action to solve the problems.

The chapter on population and public policy of the Commission on

Population and the American Future (1972) makes clear the meaning of the trends they report for government policy. This has pointed out that "...the choice involves nothing less than the quality of American life" (p. 75), saying that swelling numbers of job applicants put extra burden on full employment. The need is "...of slowing growth and eventaully stopping it altogether. Indeed, there might be no reason to fear a decline in population once we are past the period of growth that is in store" (p. 75). The report points out that slower growth would conserve energy and mineral resources and would be a significant aid in averting problems in the area of water supply, agricultural land supply, outdoor recreation resources, and environmental pollution (p. 75), and adds, "For government, slower population growth offers offers potential benefits in the form of reduced pressures on educational and other services; and, for the people, it enhances the potential for improved levels of service in these areas" (p. 75-76). Clearly the objective is to keep fertility at a low level.

The Commission on Population and the American Future recognized that in the past, the white middle class in the United States has accounted for the major share of population growth. However, white middle class fertility rates have been declining and as of 1975 were below replacement levels. It is families among the low income and the cultural minorities which continue to grow. It is not unlikely that concern will increase regarding these groups.

If so, what role does population education play? To what extent are the fears of the population educators justified, and if they are justified, will a non-problem approach solve the problem? Let us first look at certain sociopolitical issues and then at the educational system which must implement population education programs. We may then examine some basic concerns relating to the survival of a society and possible ways of dealing with the issues raised.

The sociopolitical climate for population education

Attah (1973) has asked what the consequences of unchecked growth of the nonwhite population might be while the white population progressed to zero growth. His projections conclude that a U.S. non-white population exceeding 50 percent would be possible after the year 2065. Nor do these estimates take into consideration the reported increasing flow of illegal immigrants into the United States. In addition to the estimated 8,000,000 illegal immigrants now in the country, there may be an additional 2,000,000 a year coming in from Canada and Mexico. Recent press reports quoting the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service report that 710,000 Mexicans alone were apprehended as illegal aliens in 1974 (Ann Arbor News, 1975). The House Judiciary Committee is looking into the matter and proposing legislation. The subcommittee

chairman, Joshua Eilberg, is reported to have said that one million jobs could be opened up if the measure is approved (The Ann Arbor News, 1975). With the country facing increasingly higher unemployment, concern with growth of minority groups could become an increasingly charged political issue.

Some blacks have been concerned for some time over possible attempts on the part of the government to reduce minority growth. Samuel Yette, in his book, The Choice (1972), has commented on the concern regarding government motives which to him suggest black genocide. As an example he cites the deliberations of the White House Conference on Food and Nutrition in December 1969, pointing out that after

early denials that anyone went hungry in the U.S., the Nixon administration, in the face of clear evidence, finally admitted there was a problem and called the conference. However, Yette reports, "In his December 2 speech opening the conference, President Nixon dashed the hopes of many by not proposing any specific measures for immediate relief of hunger. His primary concern obviously was toward reducing the number of the hungry--not hunger itself--for it was on how to reduce the hungry that he had specific recommendations and specific action" (p. 112).

What Nixon proposed in his speech was a Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. The nutrition conference went on to prepare three proposals regarding birth control to be recommended to the U.S. Congress. These were:

1. Making birth control information and devices available to any and all girls over the age of 13 who requested them, with or without the approval of parents.
2. Mandatory abortion for any such unmarried girl found to be pregnant and within the first three months of that pregnancy.
3. Mandatory sterilization of any such girl giving birth out of wedlock for a second time.

The reasons given for the proposals were concern for the health

of a young girl giving birth out of wedlock at an early age and for the newborn who, under the circumstances of poverty, would not be well nourished. However, a black group protested, and items on birth control were dropped from the recommendations of the conference (Yette, 1972, pp. 114-116).

The Commission on Population and the American Future (1972), when it was called, made every effort to get the views of minorities and present them. They concluded the section on minorities with the following:

> "The decade 1960 to 1970 saw doubling of the number of young black men and women aged 15 to 24 in the metropolitan areas of every part of the nation except in the south. This increase, twice that for comparable white youth, was the result of higher black fertility to begin with, participation in the post-World War baby boom, and continued migration away from the southern poverty. The result has been more young black people ill-equipped to cope with demands of urban life, more likely to wind up unemployed or in dead-end, low-paying jobs, and caught in the vicious wheel of poverty, welfare, degradation and crime.
>
> The facts we have cited describe a crisis for our society. They add up to a demographic recipe for more turmoil in our cities, more

> bitterness among our 'have-nots,' and greater divisiveness among all of our peoples. What we have said here means that unless we address our major domestic social problems in the short run - beginning with racism and poverty - we will not be able to resolve fully the question of population growth, in the long run it not only will further aggravate our current problems, but may eventually dwarf them" (p. 74).

The Commission also indicated what they regarded as the answer.

> "As these groups move into the mainstream, their family size diminishes. For example, blacks with high school diplomas have about the same number of children as their white counterparts: college-educated blacks have even fewer children on the average than their white counterparts" (p. 72).

The fact that the recommendations of the Commission were rejected by the Nixon administration was hardly reassuring to minorities. With a seemingly unsympathetic government, minorities may increasingly see an increase in their numbers as the only way to achieve equality. In the interviews held by the Commission, there was a clear expression on the part of some minority leaders that the only way to break into the "system" was by growing so large in numbers that they could not be ignored (Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, 1972, pp. 72-73). This expression may be only the position held by a few in minority communities. There is

evidence however, that minorities view population growth differently than the majority white population. In a national study of incoming freshmen attending Amreican colleges and universities, 50 percent of those in non-sectarian coeducational colleges said that the use of tax incentives to control birth rates should be increased while 38 percent of those in predominately black colleges gave such a response (ACE, 1973). In another survey of high school and college students, 72 percent of white students compared with 38 percent of black students agreed with a statement that the U.S. government should have tax incentives for small families (Russo, et al, 1971). In the same study, 73 percent of white students compared with 44 percent of black students agreed that the rate at which the U.S. population is growing is a serious problem. The study also found that while 74 percent of white students indicated that population growth affected them personally, only 26 percent of black students agreed with the statement (Russo, et al, 1971).

Distrust of government programs is indicated in attitudes toward vasectomy. In a study of 498 black couples, 84 percent of men rejected sterilization. Over half of those interviewed believed that steriliza-tion was a method of genocide; 53 percent stated that the survival of the black people depended on increasing the number of births (Darity and Turner, 1974).

Let me turn briefly to how minorities may view population education programs in the schools.

The educational climate for population education

Hollingshead, in Elmtown's Youth (1949), gave us a picture of the pervasive influence of the social stratification of a small town on the educational process. The study made clear that the high school as an institution responded to students more in terms of the social class from which they came than in terms of the qualities and abilities of each student. The school was clearly subservient to the local community and the experiences the student had in the school were only a reflection of his experience in the community itself. The class inequities of schools in large cities in the U.S. have also been documented (Sexton, 1961).

Research indicates that family position is an important variable in the aspiration to go to college. In perhaps the majority of middle class families, the question of college attendance is hardly debated; it is assumed. Parents also assume the costs of such education in their planning for children. Estimates of the cost of rearing a child invariably include the cost of education through college.

For children reared in ghetto neighborhoods no such assumption is made. In the past, aspirations have been consistent with the reality of being reared in families where the importance of education is not stressed, attending schools of inferior quality, the lack of funds to attend college, and the knowledge that even if one does make the grade educationally, one may not be employable because of social status. Children reflect the educational values and aspirations of the families and neighborhoods in which they are socialized (Havinghurst, et al, 1962) (Wilson, A.B., 1959). The discipline required for academic

achievement has not been a value held and cultivated in families and peer groups of the lower class, nor has it been encouraged in their schools.

The long established system of formal school segregation in the South and informal segregation in the North has resulted in marked inferior education for blacks. Even if a black youth, perhaps in spite of family, peers and community, developed a desire for academic achievement, the quality of education he would receive in the schools would place him at a distinct disadvantage in competing with students from better schools. A basic problem has been the tendency of public educational institutions to make social inequality legitimate by individualizing failure (Clark, 1960). Junior colleges and some universities grant admission to any graduate regardless of grades in high school. Many of these students fail, and the failure is regarded as failure of the individual by both the system and the person himself. Studies, however, indicate that the depressed aspirations of blacks may be better accounted for by the fact that so many are found in the lower socioeconomic bracket, since similar characteristics are found among lower-class whites. The failure is that of the system to prepare individuals for higher education. Race simply adds to the problem of low status and its effect upon aspirations and educational possibilities (McKee, 1969, p. 399).

In many ghetto schools as in many schools in developing countries, what is called education is simply non-functional or counterproductive in terms of the generally stated objective of education. In such schools, teachers do not teach, students do not study. No real attempt is made at education. Again, the reason often given by those administrators and teachers responsible is that the majority of the children are unable to learn and the few that are will not make the effort. The fatalistic attitude attributed to the poor is assumed by those who control the school system: "Why do anything when it doesn't make any difference anyway?"

In recent years resentment on the part of minorities toward poor schools has brought about increasing demands for local autonomy in control of school policy. In some cities such as New York, this has resulted in a decentralization of the city school structure, which provides a basis for parents to share in decisions about the educational process (McKee, 1969, p. 402).

Implications for population education

It is clear the minorities are not likely to look with favor upon programs designed by the majority to affect lower fertility rates on the part of minorities. With their experience with the school system provided for them by the majority, they are likely to fight for and get greater control over local school policy. This is not likely to make it easier to include population education into the schools they control. Yet what are the recommendations of the Commission on Population and the American Future? The report reads:

> "In view of the important role that education can play in developing an understanding of the causes and consequences of population growth and distribution, the Commission recommends enactment of a Population Education Act to assist school systems in establishing well-planned education programs so that present and future generations will be better prepared to meet the challenge arising from population change.... To implement such a program, the Commission recommends that federal funds be appropriated for teacher training, for curriculum development and materials preparation, for research and evaluation, for the support of model programs, and for assisting state departments of education to develop competence and leadership in population education" (p. 141).

In spite of the comment in the chapter on education that, "It is for the individual community, school, or agency to decide what is appropriate and wise for them in preparing such educational programs" (p. 79) nothing is in the recommendations which would facilitate such action. For example, in the recommendations regarding racial minorities and the poor, there are statements about free choice of housing and taxes but nothing about local control of education. The recommendations for implementation of population education are exactly what minorities fear. Model programs that are controlled by the establishment, particularly state departments of education, can hardly be expected to be looked

upon favorably. After all, it is these same state departments of education which have supported the inequities minorities now see. Intervention programs, in developing countries or in the United States, which are designed and administered at the top have generally resulted in the frustration of local goal achievement and will likely continue to do so.

It is conceded that the problem is not an easy one. Providing funding to local communities in no way assures success. Local leaders are quite as capable as state officials of using such funds for their own purposes rather than to reach program objectives (Helfgot, J., 1974). A better understanding of the growth and development of "grass roots" programs is needed.

Reality and myth in the search for solutions

The objectives of the Commission on Population and the American Future are certainly laudable.

> "In the broadest sense, the goals of the population policies we recommend aim at creating social conditions wherein the desired values of individuals, families, and communities can be realized; equalizing social and economic opportunities for women and members of disadvantaged minorities; and enhancing the potential for improving quality of life" (p. 78).

The promise then is nothing less than equalizing social and economic opportunities for all members of the society. This is consistent with the American dream. For example, equality of education has always been an agreed

upon value of the society. The fact that it has been so stated has undoubtedly accounted for some gains in education for minorities. In much of Western Europe no such promise is made and education is still largely oriented toward providing different preparations for different social positions. Still, if we are to find solutions to problems we must deal with the realities of those problems.

Drawing upon Parsonian theory of social action (Parsons, 1948, 1949), Aberle and his colleagues (1950) have listed four conditions for the termination of the existence of a society. These are: 1. biological extinction, 2. apathy of the members, 3. absorption of the society into another society, and 4. the war of all against all. It is the fourth of these conditions which must concern us in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The war of all against all is characterized by an emphasis on subgroup and individual welfare over societal concerns. Prevention of the development of such a condition can only be through effective internalized values and goals of the society supported by a majority of its members. The use of force to control large segments of the society, in theory and seemingly in practice, proves ineffective. The critical functional prerequisite for survival is the effective socialization of new members from infants and the induction of an individual of any age into a role of the society where new learning is required. This socialization must be effective enough to encourage support for the system in spite of scarcity of means and the frustrations of expectations which scarcity of means must assume. This theory does not focus on static equalibriums of structural analysis. Rather,

consideration is given to what must be done in any society rather than how things are done. Because of the principle of scarcity, all societies must allocate goods and services, including relatively higher and lower status roles which are associated with these goods and services. The important point here is that if the theory is correct, there must continue to be stratification which discriminates between higher and lower standings. The American promise, as indeed the promise of other social systems that status roles and goods and services will be equally distribued, may be inconsistent with societal survival. This principle conflicts with the promise of "equalizing social and economic opportunities" for the disadvantaged.

The United States has gone through a period of high consumption of goods and resources inconsistent with continued supply. There is increasing recognition that not only will the "standard living" of Americans not continue to improve, but it must decline. Cutting back, not increasing consumption is now the call of the day. With increasing scarcity of resources, available goods may be expected to decrease. But people are reluctant to part with things acquired and believed to be deserved. Rationalization easily explains why others should have less. The income of the lower socioeconomic section of the American society has indeed improved, but the percent distribution of income among the classes has remained the same for the last quarter of a century. The upper strata would seem to permit an increase in income of the lower strata as long as they themselves are increasing. But what can be expected when there is a need to reduce consumption? Who will be expected to make the cuts? The promise of equality for all can result

only in frustration of aspirations regardless of the social system. But social systems can bring about changes in social structure and values which result in a distribution of desired goods and services based upon <u>other</u> criteria than race and class. The fact that changes in values occur, is evident in our own history.

The central American cultural theme in the past has been the Protestant ethic where thrift, hard work and self-denial were valued. As Flacks (1971) has pointed out, the average man was socialized to produce, work hard, save, resist temptation that might divert him from doing his part for his family, his community and country. These values were critical in the phenomenal growth of the American technology and economic system in the nineteenth century.

However, in the twentieth century, the free market and individual competition were replaced by the large scale organization with its planning and bureaucratic management. As a result, a significant increase in consumer goods was available to the common man at prices he could afford. For the first time in history, a large segment of the society could literally consume at a rate usually reserved only for the elite.

Modern man had seemingly found the answer to the principle of scarcity. There was therefore no longer a need to save, to be self-denying and to postpone gratification. In fact, Flacks (1971) has claimed that the new social structure of the economic system of the country not only made high levels of consumption possible, it required high levels of consumption to maintain it. Changes in social values developed in support of changes in social structure. The change was from rewarding hard work, self-denial and thrift to status gained from high consumption and the enjoyment of play. As the beer commercial says, you only go around once! The economic change caused a shift from the family oriented entrepreneur to the large enterprise and with it was lost much of the supporting strengths of the extended family unit which often lived in the same

community for generations. Under the new system, nuclear family units became highly mobile, moving to wherever career opportunities led.

Affluence and the automobile suggested by Kirk (1973) as the cause of loss of community were only intervening variables in a complicated process of economic, social and political change. But if this change was due to a set of unusual circumstances found in the United States at a given point in history, significant change could again take place if the circumstances were again modified. The principle of scarcity is still with us. We have lived beyond our means at the expense of much of the rest of the world, and that condition has created world pressures which can only result in a significant decline in American consumption rates. Further, a return to a lower level of consumption and a more equal distribution could result in greater rather than less satisfaction in living and place less rather than more strain on individuals.

If we are to deal effectively with population issues involving minorities, a greater understanding is needed regarding variables associated with minority fertility behavior.

Minority fertility behavior

There are few data which examine the correlates of effective fertility control among minorities in the United States. However, one of the variables which has been suggested in this regard for peasant societies has been fatalism (Fawcett and Bornstein, 1973), (Poffenberger and Poffenberger, 1973).

A U.S. study which indicates the types of research which may prove useful in this area was conducted by Graves and Bradshaw (1972). The sample was of 289 black unmarried girls under 19 years of age who had just terminated their first pregnancy. The study was conducted at a large charity hospital in a major Southern city. Since 90% of all first births to black mothers less than 19 years of age in the metropolitan area occur in the hospital, the findings were regarded as generalizable to the entire community. Over 90% of the girls indicated a desire to avoid another pregnancy and selected either an IUD or the pill. A follow-up study, however, found few girls still using /any method after one year. The interesting part of the study was a comparison of those who continued and those who discontinued the use of the pill with degree of fatalism as the independent variable. As a part of the follow-up study, what the authors called a "passivity scale" was administered which clearly indicated degrees of fatalism. Some of the items to which/the respondents were asked to agree or disagree to were: "Success depends more on luck than real ability", "Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself", "Our country has too many people who can do little to raise their standard of living", and "From your experience, would you say that it is better

to make any sacrifice to succeed in life, or is it better to accept whatever comes?". Of six items, over 80% of the girls gave a fatalistic response to three or more items and 64% gave a fatalistic response to four or more. The scores were found to be related to continued use of the pill. Of the low scorers, 33.3% continued on the pill for more than a year while of the high scorers only 12.7% were still active after one year. The implication would seem to be that the greater the control over their lives these girls felt, the more likely they were to remain active contraceptors.

The implications for policy are important if the desire is to reduce fertility rates: make minorities feel they have equal opportunities within the system. Hopefully this process is already underway.

A recent analysis of census data has indicated that the continuous decline in fertility in the United States since 1959 has actually been most pronounced and most rapid among minority groups, particularly blacks (Sweet, 1974). This analysis found that while the percent decline in fertility rates for urban whites between 1957-60 and 1967-70 was 26.8%, the decline for blacks was 36.8%. The decline was above 34% in both the rural and urban South as well as for blacks in other parts of the country. This trend would seem to support the position that blacks are responding to changes in values regarding family size as are the white majority. Calls for high fertility on the part of some black leaders may well fail if personal interests are believed to lie in smaller families. If minority communities are left to themselves without feeling pressure from majorities, fertility rates may be expected to narrow

the traditional fertility differential among various subgroups. The American dream of the "good life" is communicated to all through the mass media and indeed it is likely that the decline in fertility is due in part to the fact that minorities may feel an increasing share of goods and services may be theirs if they have smaller families. In spite of the slow progress of equal rights programs, clearly many achievement oriented men and women from minority groups see possibilities that did not exist even a few years ago. The decline in fertility itself may be expected to raise standards of living to some extent and fewer children in schools may make it possible to increase the investment per child, as Sweet (1974) has pointed out, without an increase in real expenditures.

So there is perhaps nothing to worry about. Not so! An argument can be made that revolutions take place when things are improving, not when they are getting worse. The distance minorities have come only makes them more aware of how far behind they were, and the issues involved in the distribution of goods and status may be expected to intensify rather than be modified. The struggle over scarce resources will continue. In addition, there will be those who will not be pleased with a slowing of population growth. In a recent issue of the Economic Education Bulletin of the American Institute for Economic Research, Harwood (1975) reacts strongly to what he calls, "The suicide of Western Civilization." The author claims, "We should be worrying not about the population explosion but the population implosion." The Bulletin foresees not only

economic disaster but a complete breakdown of organized society.

It can be expected that social demographers will continue to have their hands full monitoring changing population trends and indicating policy implications to government leaders. In addition, the people of the country must continuously be aware of the need for policy modification and support leaders who act in accordance with societal survival needs.

A modest suggestion for change in approach to population education

If we are to have a useful and creative discussion regarding the future of population education, I believe some attention needs to be given to the sociopolitical and education variables I have discussed thus far. I have attempted to show that these issues relating to the subject matter of popualtion education are indeed problems -- problems involving the survival of society. Yet the diverse groups of people who work professionally in population education can play another role. I see these two roles as having quite different objectives and as a result may assist in easing the concern of minority groups regarding the objectives of the field.

In implementing programs, educators have confused two conflicting values -- concern over what is best for society and what is best for individual families.

Viederman (1974), for example, has stated,

> "Population education may be defined as an educational process which assists the individual (1) to learn the probable causes and ccnsequences of population phenomena for himself and his communities (including the world); (2) to define for himself and his communities the nature of the problems associated with population processes and characteristics; and (3) to assess the possible effective means by which the society as a whole and he as an individual can respond to and influence these processes in order to enhance the quality of life now and in the future."

I believe a seeming source of confusion among population educators is the combining of national needs with those of individuals and communities. At present there are no data to support the assumption that by learning about the effects of population on the society, the individual will modify his own fertility behavior. Yet I believe this is the assumption in the following positon by Viederman.

> The goal [of population education] is to develop individuals who, by virtue of their having gained population literacy, will be able to be responsible population actors. First, the individual would understand how his own actions affect population processes and characteristics. Stress would be

> placed on the individual as a population actor constantly involved in a wide range of decisions that directly or indirectly have population consequences. Among these, for example, would be decisions concerning age-at-marriage, family size, choice of residence, and continuance of education or employment. Second, the individual would understand how population phenomena affect him and society. Here the focus would be on how such things as the size and rate of growth and composition and distribution of the population affect such things as the political system, resource utilization, subjective feelings of crowding, and the availability of social services. Finally, the programs would assist the individual to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate the impact of personal and public decisions affecting population change.

In actuality, individuals within any society may well use different criteria to judge what is best in terms of their own interests and what might be best for the country. Certainly it cannot be assumed as Hardin (1968) has pointed out, that individuals are likely to behave in the common interest without the impositons of incentives and sanctions. I suggest that since individuals may think differently about behaviors which are personally best, and norms of behavior best for the society, that they be dealt with separately. I propose that what is now regarded as population education can be more productively dealt with if it is

divided into two related parts having functionally different objectives: those having to do with social demography and those having to do with family planning education.

We may define social demography as the study of the causes and effects of population size, growth, composition, distribution and trends. The objective of teaching social demography would be problem oriented in terms of the society and provide the understanding necessary for decision-making in terms of public policy and programs, both to those who plan and carry out as well as to the people who must support such policies and programs.

With its research basis in population trends, social demography clearly has a role in the task of teaching about community and national problems related to population as well as communicating their findings to those who decide and implement population-related decisions.

Admittedly this role for demography is controversial. Wayland (1973) has stated, "Population education in secondary schools is not a simplification of demography or population." But he takes a narrow view of demography, viewing it as the study of the "population phenomenon" which ignores relationships, a position with which some demographers agree. In his review of population textbooks, Bouvier (1973) commented "...some writers define demography in a formal sense and consider the relation between population and nondemographic variables as falling under 'population studies.'" He, himself, however feels this view is too narrow. "The relationship between population and the broader systems, while not purely demographic, must also be considered (in texts). Thus, the basic content of a demography course should be population (or social demography), with secondary (but necessary) attention being

given to the technical dimension (formal demography), as well as to the relationship of population to the more encompassing systems of which it is part." He says further, "...it is difficult to visualize a basic text not considering the relation between population and the larger systems: socioeconomic, resources, ecological." Even in terms of textbooks in demography, Day (1973) in a review of seven of them was critical of the fact that five of the seven did not, in his judgment, pay enough attention to the possible consequences of the demographic condition.

We may define family planning education as the examination of the causes and effects of the number and spacing of children for individual families. The objective of such activity would be to provide the understanding necessary for decision-making at an individual and family level.

Let me use an example to indicate the different roles such programs might play. In the past, school counselors have often seen their role as that similar to the principal, to help students behave in ways that are in the best interest of the school. Yet if a counselor is to be helpful to the individual student, the student must feel that his or her own interests and problems will be given primary consideration. The role of the principal is clear and needed, and so is that of the counselor. They work together but they approach their job differently. A step in clarifying approaches and values in population education would be a recognition of the need for those playing both the role of deciding, communicating and instituting population policies which are in the best interest at a given time for the society and those who have as their primary concern the interests and welfare of individuals and families as well as subgroups within the society.

There has been a demonstrated need for work on a personal basis in the population field. According to the report of the Commission on Population and the American Future, the 1970 National Fertility Study has indicated a substantial incidence of unplanned pregnancies and unwanted births in the in the United States (1972, p. 99). The survey found that 44% of all births to currently married women during the five years between 1966 and 1970 were unplanned and that 15% were reported by parents as having never been wanted. Nearly two-thirds of all sixth or higher order births were reported as unwanted. The data would indicate that well over two and a half million births during this period might not have occurred had perfect fertility control been possible: Unwanted fertility is also highest among the poor and poorly educated. In 1970, women with no high school education reported that 31% of their births in the preceeding five years were unwanted at the time of

conception while only seven percent of college women reported unwanted births during the same period. The highest rate of all was for black women with less than three years of high school. Of this group 55% reported unwanted births during the period 1966-1970.

Much work needs to be done with youth. A national sample of 4,611 15-19 year old girls found that 28% of those never married reported having sexual intercourse (Kantner and Zelnik, 1973). The percent sexually active increased from 14% at age 15 to 46% at age 19. The authors claimed that the proportion of teenagers who have premarital intercourse is actually higher since about 60% of married teenagers report having had coitus prior to marriage. They also report that teenagers who come from poverty homes are not much more likely than those from higher socioeconomic levels to be sexually experienced. Race accounted for the largest differences in the proportions who have ever had intercourse with half as many whites as blacks reporting having had coitus.

In a further analysis of the same data Zelnik and Kantner (1974) found that in 1971, of the 2.6 million teenage girls who had sexual experience, 1.1 million became pregnant as teenagers, and 831,000 had premarital first pregnancies. Of all such premarital first pregnancies with a known outcome, nearly seven in 10 resulted in an illegitimate birth. Sklar and Berkov (1974a), reported that illegitimate births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15-19 increased from seven in 1940 to over 20 in 1970. The increase for whites

was from 3 to over 10 per 1,000 and for blacks from 40 to 90. In addition to the increasing incident of premarital intercourse, Cutright has pointed to the importance of declining age of menstruation in increasing premarital pregnancy rates (1972).For example, in 1870 when age of menarche was about 16 years, only about 13% of girls would have been fecund by the age they might have graduated from high school (between 17 and 18 years). In 1970, with the average age of menarche between 12 and 13 years, about 95% of girls may be expected to be fecund by the time they reach 17-1/2 years. Cutright has indicated that the fact that girls can become pregnant at an earlier age may be as important a factor in increased illegitimate and bridal pregnancies as the increase in premarital coitus. For example, the change in age of menarche from 13.5 in 1949 to 12.5 in 1968 would increase the number of 15 year old girls who are fecund from 13% in 1940 to 37% in 1968.

As with older cohorts, the majority of teenage pregnancies seem to be unplanned. Zelnik and Kantner (1974) found that about two-thirds of premarital first pregnancies to teenagers were not wanted at the time they occurred, with three-quarters of such pregnancies unwanted for those who did not marry and about half not wanted for those who did marry. However, even among those who did not intend to become pregnant, only 13 to 16% reported using any contraceptive.

Other more intensive studies support these findings. A study of unwed, never pregnant 13 to 17 year old girls seeking contraceptives in Los Angeles clinics found that 97% were having intercourse. Of

these 96% had been sexually active for at least a month while 61% had never used a contraceptive method, and most of those who did were contracepting improperly, depending on advice from friends (Fordney Settlage, et al, 1973).

Much of the increase in premarital pregnancy has come about in a period of increasing knowledge and availability of contraceptives to teenagers. Kantner and Zelnik (1973) found that over 95% of all girls 15 to 19 knew of the pill although contraceptive practice was minimal. Sklar and Berkov (1974b) have remarked that in spite of widespread availability of contraceptives and abortion, teenage illegitimacy in California persists at a high level. They believe that family planning activity in the field thus far has been oriented toward improving the means of reducing fertility but ignores the question of motivation.

Cutright (1974) does not see the situation as bleakly. He views the California statistics as indicating a rather rapidly declining illegitimacy rate. He has pointed out that between 1970 and 1973, the general fertility rate in California declined from 84.6 to 63.6. The decline among blacks was even more striking, with a 30% reduction from 1970 to 1973, which if continued over time would result in a replacement level of new mothers for succeeding black cohorts. The black illegitimacy rate for unmarried women 15-44 in 1973 was estimated at 61.2, down 24% from the 1970 level. Among black teenagers the 1973 rate was 23% less than in 1970.

The debate over how meaningful the statistics are regarding desire to control fertility on the part of teenagers will continue

as it does for those in developing countries. Even so, in the population field, there will be increasing numbers of people working at the personal level. The Commission on Population and the American Future has indicated the need to assist youth in effective fertility control for individual well-being.

> We deplore the various consequences of teenage pregnancy, including the recent report from New York that teenagers account for about one-quarter of the abortions performed under their new statute during the first year. Adolescent pregnancy offers a generally bleak picture of serious physical, psychological, and social implications for the teenager and the child. Once a teenager becomes pregnant, her chances of enjoying a rewarding, satisfying life are diminished. Pregnancy is the number one cause for school drop-out among females in the United States. The psychological effects of adolescent pregnancy are indicated by a recent study that teenage mothers have a suicide attempt rate 10 times that of the general population (1972, p. 109).

One can quibble with the statement. For example, is it pregnancy that is the significant factor in suicide or the set of variables which contribute to pregnancy and which in turn becomes part of a total psychological behavior set? But the point that increasing numbers of teenagers need personal help with their fertility behavior is clear and in my view this need should be a concern of population education.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper began with an examination of the question of whether or not population education should be problem oriented in its approach. The question is important when considering the political aspects of population education. If it is not taught as a problem, then it should disturb no one and this is the evident reason some population educators have backed away from the problem oriented approach. But one does not deal effectively with issues by denying them. Population in all its ramifications, has always been and will always be a major societal concern.

If we agree that population issues must be dealt with as problems, what seem to be the central concerns at the present time? Since the growth of the population in the United States has begun to decline, the ZPG movement of the late 1960's has lost its momentum. In fact, there are already expressions of concern associating declining fertility rates with societal suicide. A potentially explosive political issue has to do with the changing racial percentage of the total population. As the white majority reaches replacement and minority groups continue at relatively high fertility rates, the majority may view this shift as a political, economic and social threat. Minority groups, feeling increasing political power, view numerical strength as an important element in their attempt to increase their share of the valued goods and services of the society. But status positions and consumable resources are limited. At a period in history when minorities are increasing their aspirations, the population in general is faced with the need to decrease consumption to be consistent with available resources and to protect the natural

environment. The inevitable struggle to make more equitable the distribution of status roles and goods and the changes in values which it entails, must be a basic concern of population educators, since a failure on the part of the people of the country to understand the problem can set in motion forces which may result in struggles inconsistent with societal survival.

Any feeling that fertility control is being forced on minority groups will be resisted by these groups. Any attempt to manipulate school programs in minority communities will be met with distrust as a result of long experience with majority control of education in the United States. On the other hand, fertility rates of minorities are declining as a result of the same social changes which have brought about declining fertility rates on the part of the majority.

As limited as our understanding is at present of correlates of fertility behavior, personal and group feeling of control over life events seems to predict to effective fertility control. This would imply the best strategy to reach ZPG among minorities would be to accelerate social structural and cultural changes which increase minority opportunities for status positons and the resulting increase in control of the distribution of valued goods and services. But the principle of scarcity requires that a shift must also be made in what is valued in the society. Such a shift can be viewed positively since lower rates of consumption can have advantages in terms of more rewarding emotional patterns of living.

The issues centering around population concerns are as serious as the survival of the society itself. Population education, if it is to be considered seriously as a field, must be problem oriented. But the

concern of population educators that a problem orientation will create problems for the field is justified. A possible solution is a reconsideration of the stated objective of population education. At present the objective includes two incompatible goals: to provide people with information which will enable them to control their fertility both in their own best interests and in the best interests of society. However, what may be in the best interest of a particular individual or family may not be in the best interest of the society. I suggest that this difficulty may be resolved by dealing with these two concerns as distinguishable goals.

Every society has necessarily concerned itself with the balance between individual welfare and group welfare. Societies both at present and in the past may be rated as to the location of each on such a scale. Prewar Germany was an example of one extreme while the United States has, in principle and for the majority of population, exemplified the opposite end. Within each society and depending on its orientation, there exists lesser or greater structural arrangements which are designed to oversee each of these concerns. It seems to me that a legitimate role for what might be called social demography would be to work with other fields of science to assess population trends for policy decisions as well as to play a role in the communication to society members, courses of action which are consistent with the best intersts of the society in general. On the other hand, there is a need and a desire on the part of individuals and families to be provided with information which can assist them in controlling their fertility-related behavior in what they may regard as their own best interest. Those involved in what may be called family planning education would include those teaching and counseling young

people in the areas of family life education, sex education and reproductive behavior.

Obviously, there is no absolute solution to the ever-present dilemma of individual well-being as opposed to group well-being. The compromise must always be one of balance. A society which moves too far in either direction flirts with disaster. It is therefore necessary that representation of both positons must be present to insure that balance is preserved.

I propose that this division also clarifies the approaches that may be made to research in population education. The question of how to modify group behavior to conform with societal needs may involve manipulative and intervention strategies of a different nature than those required for individual behavior modification. The Report of the Commission on Population and the American Future (1972) has stated, "If Americans now and in future generations are to make rational, informed decisions about their own and their descendents' future, they must be provided with far more knowledge about population change and its implications than they now possess" (p.79). Yet there is little evidence to support the assumption of "rational" behavior. Psychological research has long shown that human beings do not behave logically and rationally. Behavior is a result of complicated and often conflicting sets of beliefs about objects and subjects as a result of socialization in interaction with largely unpredictable situational variables. Belief systems are indeed made up of cognitive elements but they are composed of affective elements as well. It is this affective element which in part explains the lack of predictability between verbal behavior and nonverbal behavior. The fact that all of us have occasions when we are hard put to explain our behavior

even to ourselves would seem an adequate basis for most people to question the rationality position. The assumption of the population educators that creating "population awareness" will result in changed behavior in accordance with the needs of society is unsupported by years of psychological research. Population educators must join with behavioral scientists in furthering the study of the conditions under which group norms are modified and in turn affect behavior. That individuals behave in ways to conform to group norms has been demonstrated. The reason for the conformity also can, in part, be explained. Man as a social animal needs the acceptance and approval of his peers as a survival need. What is poorly understood is how changes in norms take place. This is particularly true of the kinds of policies which governments can adopt which are both politically acceptable and likely to achieve desired goals.

Behavior modification on an individual level is a different matter. In the case of societal needs, we are dealing with the manipulation of the very social structure of the society in the hopes that value patterns will change. The skills needed for work with individuals have to do with the ability to identify and relate to others. Either in teaching or counseling, effectiveness depends in part upon interpersonal relationships. We know something of the types of personalities which are best suited to work with premaritally pregnant girls and those who are best suited for teaching reproductive behavior. Much activity is now underway in finding more effective ways to change behavior, either on an individual level or in small groups. It is perhaps in this area where research needs to be concentrated for those concerned with individual welfare. Consideration also needs to be given to approaches which may be used in monitoring and feed-back of the effects of government programs in terms of a maintenance of a balance between individual and societal concerns.

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